Four things every talent acquisition lead needs to know

Masterclass handout

Masterclass structure

01   **Becoming a business leader**

02   **How to build a "talent magnet"**

03   **Trends in the world of recruitment**

04   **Focussing on the right data for success**

05   **Top takeaways**

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About the expert

Phil Blaydes' experience spans Silicon Valley and Europe. He has been the Head of Talent in fast-growing start-ups, a COO, a CMO, a community leader and more. He's the founder of HIGHER, the world's largest talent acquisition (TA) community in tech, and Talentful, a global recruitment process outsourcing (RPO) provider with a turnover of $40 million.

In this Personio Masterclass, he shares his expertise, along with real-life examples, to help you become the best TA leader possible. This is what Phil wishes he knew when he was starting out in TA.

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Becoming a business leader

The best talent acquisition leaders aren't just focused on recruitment. They are business leaders first. Here are three key ways to reach that goal:

- **Deeply understand your business** and how successes in recruiting translate to successes for the business.
- **Learn about the industry**, know it deeply and stay informed by subscribing to newsletters, reading trade publications and actively networking.
- **Build your profile** by becoming an expert in your industry. Know your competitors, connect with colleagues in other departments and practice true market immersion.

Breaking that down...

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Deeply understand the business

Start with executive connections

Aim for regular meetings with all C-suite members, particularly the CEO. Understand their long-term vision.

Align your goals with other teams

Review OKRs (Objectives and Key Results) across departments and identify areas where TA can support.

Seek informal interactions

Don't underestimate insights gathered in informal settings. You'll often hear first about new products and initiatives informally.

Learn about the industry

You can always know more

Make continuous learning a part of your career journey, especially when you're looking to uplevel your career.

Stay informed

Read widely on business topics, listen to podcasts and attend relevant webinars. Subscribe to newsletters and grasp industry terminology.

Build your profile

Practice market immersion

Understand your business's Unique Selling Points (USPs). Connect with your Sales and Marketing teams to benefit from their competitor analysis and market landscape knowledge.

Continuously share your results

A respected TA leader becomes an integral part of the planning process for any organisational changes, and your results can help shape those decisions.

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How to build a "talent magnet"

Build a robust, long-term talent strategy that attracts the right candidates while repelling those that wouldn't be an ideal fit.

Repelling the wrong candidates:

Define needs for the role

From the first touchpoint, spell out the working style, first 90 days of goals and what people might not like about the role. This allows people to opt out.

Create an authentic employer brand

Put your values on show, allowing people to opt out if they don't resonate. Ensure this is realistic, not a glossy view of what you'd like it to be.

Make the long-term vision clear

Consider career progression for each role, factoring in salary growth, experience band and target tenure. Think carefully before hiring at the top of that experience band.

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How to build a "talent magnet"

Build a robust, long-term talent strategy that attracts the right candidates while repelling those that wouldn't be an ideal fit.

Attracting the right candidates:

Understand your target group

Develop candidate personas to depict the ideal candidate you want to reach. Who are they? What are their goals? What are their pain points?

Craft an Employee Value Proposition

A strong company narrative significantly improves your closing rate. Research others hiring for similar roles, identify what sets you apart, then showcase those advantages.

Be present on the right channels

Leverage your candidate personas to identify the channels your ideal candidates frequent. Develop a targeted channel strategy to reach them.

AI in TA

Artificial intelligence offers advantages and challenges for TA.

Advantages: Automating repetitive tasks can provide the marginal gains needed for your team to excel. AI can help automate administrative processes such as:

Note taking

Generating onboarding content

Workflows in existing tools

Masterclass tip: Instead of focusing on sweeping industry disruptions, prioritise smaller efficiency gains. AI can't replace the human touch.

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AI in TA

Artificial intelligence offers advantages and challenges for TA.

Challenges: Job seekers may leverage tools such as ChatGPT to enhance CVs and inflate their capabilities. To mitigate this, adapt your assessment processes:

Consider real-time tasks to test skills in a secure setting.

For software engineer roles, implement pair programming during assessment.

Conduct more in-person interviews.

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Responding to other trends

Throughout your career, executives may bombard you with questions about the latest industry trends. It's crucial to develop the ability to analyse and respond effectively.

Look beyond the headlines	**Engage a community of peers**	**Align your KPIs to the trends**	**Communicate with your teams**
Seek out data and reports to either support or refute a proposed business case based on a trend.	Understand how other TA leaders address new trends. Many companies are currently adopting a 'wait-and-see' approach.	Identify specific key performance indicators (KPIs) that a trend might impact, positively or negatively.	Consider the potential stress the trends might create for your team. Keep everyone informed and engaged.

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Focus on the right data for success

Successful talent acquisition leaders are data-literate and cultivate a data-driven culture within their teams.

Recommended KPIs to focus on:

Pass-through rate

Candidates may appear qualified on paper for initial interview, but the pass-through rate to the second stage reveals whether they truly possess the necessary skills.

Quality of hire

Benchmark this against business goals. Learn how executives measure success and tailor your quality metric to align with those goals.

Offer acceptance rate

This reflects both TA team effectiveness and employer brand strength. A low rate signifies wasted time for interviewers and negatively affects productivity.

Employer brand sentiment

Rejection reasons often reveal valuable insights into employer brand sentiment, interviewer shortcomings, or weaknesses within the TA team itself.

Masterclass tip: Introduce a **bar-raiser model** to track improvement in quality of hire:

1. Group quota-carrying roles by hire year.
2. Compare their performances.

Best practice: Train "bar raisers" in the hiring process to determine if candidates would raise the standard for your organisation.

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Metrics to use carefully

Some metrics don't tell the whole story.

Overused KPIs:

Time to fill

Filling positions quickly shouldn't come at the expense of quality. The right person is worth waiting for.

Cost per hire

The impact of a great hire far outweighs the cost of filling the role. This metric is only valuable if "as low as possible" isn't the sole objective.

Time to hire

This metric adds little value in isolation. Taking time for thorough candidate assessments is optimal unless there's evidence of losing candidates during the process.

Masterclass tip: Never present data without context.

1. Investigate the reasons behind the data to explain the real story.
2. Understand the objectives of other teams and executives to tailor data presentations to their needs.
3. Agree on a reporting structure and establish a feedback loop.

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Remember these four things

Deeply understand your business

This will allow you to elevate your career while elevating your business.

Build a talent magnet

Focus on both attracting the right candidates and repelling the less than ideal candidates.

Learn to decipher trends

Meet them with the diligence they demand and communicate them with your team.

Know what to do with data

The power of telling a story through data is going to move the needle more than anything else.

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All your data, all together

Put an end to searching through countless files and systems. Personio gives you a single source of truth for all your people data — so monitoring recruitment metrics, building reports and answering complex questions is quick and easy.

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